



## *Office of the State Fire Marshal*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ILLINOIS STATE FIRE MARSHAL, IN COORDINATION WITH THE NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION, COMMEMORATES FIRE PREVENTION WEEK**

*Every Family Should Know "Two Ways Out"*

SPRINGFIELD – The Office of Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM), in cooperation with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is marking National Fire Safety Week to educate families on the importance of fire protection. This year's theme, "Have Two Ways Out" aims to educate families on how to establish a fire escape plan that includes two ways out of every room in the home.

"Having a fire escape plan should be a priority for every family. The plan should include two ways out of every room in the house," said State Fire Marshal Larry Matkaitis. "Everyone in the household should be trained on how to escape the home within the first three minutes after the sound of a smoke alarm."

A "two ways out" plan should also include overnight guests and visiting friends or family members. Families should assign an outside meeting place during a fire emergency and instruct members not to go back inside the house.

Special attention should be paid to infants and toddlers as they cannot help themselves during an emergency. An adult family member should be assigned to immediately assist infants and children under the age of 5 at the sound of a smoke alarm.

During a fire emergency, children should be taught to never hide in closets, under the bed or a table. School age children should be encouraged by parents to participate in fire drills in their schools and share with family members what they learned from the experience.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), every 80 seconds fire departments respond to a house fire in United States. In 2011, fire departments in United States responded to 1,389,500 fires. The most recent statistics reflect 369,000 house fires, resulting in more than 3,005 civilian deaths. Of those, 2,520 fatalities were reported in homes. Fire

injuries to civilians during the same year totaled 17, 500. Nearly 14,000 of those cases occurred in home fires.

The following is a list of fire prevention recommendations:

- **Create An Escape Route** – A two ways out escape plan with your family that includes every room in the house could be disguised as a fun activity through role playing. Parents should stress helping those who are most vulnerable such as seniors and the disabled.
- **Smoke Alarms** –Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home including bedrooms and hallways and replace its battery twice a year.
- **Prevent Electrical Fires** – Avoid overloading circuits or extension cords. Cords and wires should never be placed under rugs or in high traffic areas.
- **Keep Plugs Safe** – Unplug all appliances when not in use. Follow the manufacturer's safety precautions and use all five senses to spot any potential disasters.
- **Alternate Heaters** – Make sure there is ample space around any portable heating unit. Anything that could catch fire should be at least three feet away. Inspect your home's chimney annually and use fire screens to help keep any fires in the fireplace.
- **Position Appliances Carefully** – Try to keep TV sets, kitchen and other appliances away from windows with curtains. If there is a wiring problem, curtains can spread a fire quickly.
- **Clean Dryer Vents** – Clothes dryers often start fires in residential areas. Clean the lint filter every time after every drying load and clean the exhaust duct to prevent blockage behind the dryer at least twice a year.
- **Keep matches and lighters in a safe place** – Children should never be allowed to use matches or lighters. Inspect children's bedrooms for any matches or candles being used without adults' consent.

For more information about fire safety prevention and other useful information please visit <http://www.sfm.illinois.gov>.